

# FoodNet News

## Update on Working Groups. . .



There are several FoodNet working groups that are addressing specific projects or issues. The *E.coli* case-

control study, the *Cryptosporidium* case-control study, Neonatal case review and the Education/Prevention Working Groups are each writing manuscripts. The *Giardia* study, Infant Illness case-control study, *Listeria* case-control study, *Salmonella* Newport case-control study, and the *Salmonella* Enteritidis case-control study Working Groups are each working on ongoing projects. Five new working groups were formed in response to goals established at the 2003 FoodNet Vision Meeting. New FoodNet working groups formed include the Intervention, Attribution, Outbreak, Norovirus, and the Shiga Toxin-producing *E.coli* working groups.

### Interventions Working Group

The purpose of the Interventions Working Group is to identify intervention opportunities within specific populations. The group is developing two surveys. First, the working group will launch a survey of long-term health care facilities. The survey will be directed to the food service directors and will address facility characteristics (e.g., the populations served by the facility) and resident food services (e.g., information on irradiated and pasteurized products). Second, the working group has drafted a cognitive survey to help understand respondents' answers to the unpasteurized juice questions on the FoodNet Population Survey. The cognitive survey was developed because a larger than expected

number of participants indicated they had purchased and consumed unpasteurized juice.

### Outbreak Working Group

The primary goals of the Outbreak Working Group are to identify barriers to outbreak investigations, define reasons for traditionally high rates of unidentified etiologies in foodborne outbreaks, and to develop ways to improve the success of investigations. The group has modified the Supplemental Foodborne Outbreak Report Form and will complete it for all foodborne outbreaks reported from 2003 to 2004. (This form is submitted along with the standard "Fork and Spoon" form on all foodborne disease outbreaks reported in FoodNet.) The group is addressing problems with the uniformity of definitions used to confirm outbreak etiologies among states and developing methods for interpreting data consistently. Currently, the group is discussing possibilities for developing a standard (possibly web-based) questionnaire for use in multi-state outbreaks, as well as automated programs for data entry and analysis, based on a model developed in Oregon. The Outbreak Working Group joined an open meeting of persons interested in foodborne disease outbreak investigation at the ICEID Conference in Atlanta in March, 2004. The meeting focused on innovative approaches to foodborne disease outbreak investigations.

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### HUS/STEC Working Group

The purpose of the HUS/STEC Working Group is to conduct epidemiologic studies to determine trends in Shiga Toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) and factors associated with hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). The working group has initiated several projects to achieve this goal:

- 1) Laboratory survey conducted at all 10 FoodNet sites to determine recent changes in clinical laboratory practices in culture and HUS subsequent to *E. coli* O157 infection.
- 2) HUS cohort study to study the link between antibiotic exposure and Hemorrhagic Uremic Syndrome subsequent to *E. coli* O157 infection.
- 3) Analysis of FoodNet *E. coli* O157 surveillance data excluding outbreak cases to determine trends over time in sporadic illness.



## Attribution Working Group

The Attribution Working Group was developed to work on several projects that will contribute to estimating the attribution of specific foods to foodborne diseases. Knowing what proportions of cases are outbreak and travel associated is important for attribution; the group is looking at how this information can be systematically collected in FoodNet sites. When estimating the attribution of foodborne illness in humans to specific foods, the group will focus initially on a single pathogen – *Salmonella*. The Attribution Working Group has reviewed the different approaches to attribution modeling, including models used in the Netherlands and Denmark. These approaches will be adapted for the United States using FoodNet surveillance data in conjunction with other data sets provided by FoodNet partners.

## Norovirus Working Group

The primary objective of the Norovirus Working Group is to develop a method for standardized collection of data on non-foodborne outbreaks of acute gastroenteritis; such data not currently reportable nationally. The result is a draft report form that allows for prospective aggregation/reporting of data from different states.

In order to better characterize the burden of disease of non-foodborne outbreaks compared to foodborne outbreaks and the relative contribution of different etiologies, the group also gathered data on non-foodborne outbreaks that had been reported in the years up to 2002 in five FoodNet sites. Analysis of these data is ongoing. Future discussion will focus on methods to routinely report data from non-foodborne outbreaks to CDC.



## Recent Meetings and Conferences

**International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases (ICEID)  
February 29-March 3rd, 2004 Atlanta Mariot Atlanta, GA  
<http://www.iceid.org/default.asp>**

**International Collaboration on Foodborne Diseases March 3, 2004  
One West Court Square, Decatur, GA  
[http://www.cdc.gov/foodnet/mce/Int\\_collab\\_Foodbrne\\_dz.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/foodnet/mce/Int_collab_Foodbrne_dz.htm)**

**2004 FoodNet Vision Meeting March 25 and 26th, Holiday Inn Select,  
Decatur, GA**

**FoodNet Abstracts Presented at the 2004 International Conference on  
Emerging Infectious Diseases**

1. Prevalence of Diarrhea in the Community in Australia, Canada, Ireland and the United States (E.J. Scallan)
2. Is Eating Outside the Home Associated with Gastrointestinal Illness? (B. Shiferaw)
3. Clinical Laboratory Practices for the Identification of Shiga Toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* in FoodNet Sites (S. Hurd)
4. Risk Factors for Sporadic Infection Caused by *Salmonella* Enteritidis in the United States, 2002-2003 (M. Moore)
5. Decline in *Salmonella* Deaths in the United States? Data from the Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network and the National Death Index, 1996-2000 (A. Dubois)
6. The Influence of Outbreak Cases on Trends in *E. coli* O157 Infection, FoodNet sites, 1996-2002 (R. Marcus)
7. Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice of Irradiation Among Respondents to the FoodNet Population Survey in Connecticut and New York (S. Malone)
8. Rates of Hospitalization for Specific Foodborne Pathogens, FoodNet, 1996-2001 (E. Ailes)
9. FoodNet Retrospective Cohort Study: Infection with Naladixic Acid-Resistant *Salmonella* Typhi is Associated with Poor Clinical Outcomes (K. Kretsinger)
10. Healthy Pets Healthy People: An Internet Resource for Health Risks Associated with Pets (H. Bair)
11. Trends in Sporadic *Vibrio* Infections in Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network (FoodNet) Sites, 1996-2002 (D. Voetch)
12. Incidence of Foodborne Illnesses in the United States, FoodNet, 2002 (J. Nelson)\*
13. The Burden of Diarrheal Illness assessed by the FoodNet Population Survey, 2002-2003 (M.B. McMillian)
14. Dietary and Medical Risk Factors for Sporadic *Listeria monocytogenes* Infection: A FoodNet Case-Control Study—United States, 2000-2003 (J. Varma) \*
15. Taking Antimicrobial Agents and Eating Cheese Made from Non-Pasteurized Milk Are Risk Factors for Infections with Multi-Drug Resistant *Salmonella* Serotype Newport—United States, 2002-2003 (J. Varma)\*
16. Higher Incidence of *Campylobacter* Infection in Australia Compared with the United States in 2001 (H. Valley)
17. The FoodNet Reactive Arthritis Study: Antibiotic Use among Persons with Culture Confirmed Enteric Infections (J. Townes)
18. Health consequences of Infection with Multi-Drug Resistant and Pan-Susceptible *Salmonella* Newport Reported to FoodNet—United States, 2002-2003 (R. Devasia)

(continued on page 5)



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## FoodNet Welcomes New Staff Members: Cindi Snider, Elizabeth Ailes, Katie Fullerton, Heather Bair, Alison Drake, Elaine Scallan, John Dunn and Nicole Ishill

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There are several new faces to the FoodNet unit at the CDC. Cindi Snider is a surveillance epidemiologist. She is responsible for HUS surveillance and the FoodNet Outbreak Supplemental data. In addition, she is a member of the HUS/STEC working group, Outbreak working group, and Norovirus working group. Cindi holds a BSPH from UNC-Chapel Hill and a MHS from Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene & Public Health. Before joining FoodNet, she worked for the Arizona Department of Health Services.



**Elizabeth Ailes, Cindi Snider and Katie Fullerton**

Elizabeth Ailes is a surveillance epidemiologist. She graduated from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, ME with a BA and from Yale University's School of Epidemiology and Public Health with an MPH. She is already familiar with FoodNet as her Masters thesis used the FoodNet *Cryptosporidium* data. Elizabeth's current activities will focus on the active surveillance data.

Katie Fullerton is a surveillance epidemiologist. She will be working with sites primarily on the Infant *Salmonella/Campylobacter* case-control study. Katie received an MPH in infectious diseases from the University of California, Berkeley, and worked at the National Immunization Program in Immunization Safety for two years prior to joining FoodNet.

Heather Bair is a veterinarian who acts as the webmaster for the FoodNet web sites and is a health educator. She is responsible for preparing the annual reports to be published on the web, putting together the newsletters, and general website maintenance. Heather received her BS from Hope College in Holland, Michigan, a Masters in parasitology from University of Kentucky, and her veterinary degree from Michigan State University.



Alison Drake comes to FoodNet from the NARMS group. Alison will be our Integrated Surveillance Coordinator. She is responsible for the integration of FoodNet surveillance data with other data sources, primarily NARMS and PulseNet data. Alison received her BS from the University of Michigan and a MPH from the University of Michigan's School of Public Health.

**Elaine Scallan and Alison Drake**

Elaine Scallan is an epidemiologist coordinating the FoodNet population survey. She is also a part of the Intervention and Attribution Working



Groups. Elaine has a BA in Sociology and Economics and an MA in Sociology from the National University of Ireland Maynooth. She has a PhD in Epidemiology from the University College, Dublin. She has come to us from the Food Safety Authority of Ireland in Dublin.



John Dunn is an Epidemic Intelligence Service officer. John is conducting a survey of fairs and petting zoos to find out if and how preventative measures are being taken to prevent transmission of enteric pathogens. Before joining the CDC, he completed a veterinary degree and a PhD in veterinary epidemiology at Louisiana State University where he focused on Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* in ruminant populations. Before graduate school, he was an associate veterinarian in a mixed animal practice.

Nicole Ishill is a statistician. She has a BA in mathematics from the State University of New York at Binghamton and a Masters in Statistics from Florida State University. Before joining FoodNet, Nicole taught statistics at Florida State and Tallahassee Community College.



## Laboratory Shipping Rules: Shipping of NARMS Isolates to CDC by State Public Health Laboratories

*Each participating laboratory should use standard laboratory protocol for bacterial isolation.*

### I. Isolation of sample:

Bacteria should be checked for purity by streaking for isolation and insulating a single colony to a nutrient agar slant (TSA, HI, etc.) in a screw cap tube (no smaller than 13mm X 100mm). After overnight incubation, tighten the screw cap and seal with tape or parafilm. Please write state ID# and organism on each tube.

### II. Packaging of sample:

Individual tubes should be wrapped using absorbent material such as, cotton, paper towels, etc. to ensure tubes do not break during shipping. Seal tubes in a Ziploc bag and place in a durable watertight shipping container that is then placed in a box for shipping. Tubes should be shipped in accordance with hazardous material guidelines (See CDC website for more information: [www.cdc.gov/od/ohs/biosfty/shipregs.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/od/ohs/biosfty/shipregs.htm)). Be sure to include log sheets and do not write in space designated for CDC.

### III. Shipping of sample:

Packages should be sent either overnight or priority mail with 1-2 day delivery. Packages should be mailed on Mondays or Tuesdays for delivery by Thursday. Each site should begin data collection January 1, 2004. The first shipment of isolates should occur February 1, 2004. Subsequent shipments should occur at least once per quarter (monthly preferred) for the remainder of the year.

Please mail packages to the following address:



Kevin Joyce  
CDC/NCID/FDDB/NARMS MS G-29  
NARMS Laboratory  
**Building 17/ Room 1227**  
1600 Clifton Rd.  
Atlanta, GA 30333

Questions regarding shipping or receipt of isolates should be directed to Kevin Joyce at (404) 639-1944 (or 639-3334) or [kdj7@cdc.gov](mailto:kdj7@cdc.gov).

## Who's in the Net ?

“Who's In the Net?” is a new feature in FoodNet News that will give readers the opportunity to meet FoodNetters from different sites. The purpose is to learn more about our colleagues through a variety of questions, some standard as well as some random... The first person we've selected to feature is FoodNet's new Project Coordinator, Jennifer Nelson.

*Jennifer Nelson has been with the FoodNet/NARMS since February 2000 and has been the FoodNet Coordinator since June 2003. The single event which has had the greatest impact on her career was to work as a student with the NARMS group and to write her Master's thesis using FoodNet/NARMS Campylobacter case-control study data. Though she is now working with FoodNet, Jennifer continues to be interested in the epidemiology of antimicrobial-resistant organisms. Besides working with foodborne illness, Jennifer also enjoys creative activities such as gardening and cooking, reading and spending time with her husband, Scott. She admits that her worst habit is worrying, but that she likes to relax by being outdoors, preferably by the water. When asked what advice she would give to a new person in her field of work she replied, “Advice??? I am the newcomer! However, my brother is in politics and one piece of advice, which can be generalized to any occupation, he has given is “don't burn your bridges.”*



## Abstracts cont...

19. Gastrointestinal and Invasive *Salmonella* Infections in the United States, 1996-1999: Medical Costs and Productivity Loss Using FoodNet Burden of Illness Estimates (B. Adhikari)

### From our states...

An Outbreak of Scombroid Fish Poisoning Following Consumption of Escolar, California, 2003 (K. Feldman)

Food Handling Education in TN Residence –FoodNet Population Survey, 2002-03 (A. Ingram)

\* oral presentation

Farewell to FoodNet Staff Members Matt Moore (FoodNet Chief), Malinda Kennedy (FoodNet Project Coordinator), Jenny Lay (Epidemiologist), Jay Varma (EIS Officer), Beth Imhoff (WHO Global Salm-Surv Coordinator), Anyana Banerjee (Epidemiologist), Nicole Baker (Epidemiologist) and Molly Frierman-Jolly (Health Communications Specialist)!

FoodNet wishes the very best to these terrific staff members as they part CDC to pursue future personal, educational and career endeavors! Thank you for all of your hard work! We'll miss you.

# Spotlight on New Mexico

New Mexico is very happy to join FoodNet; January 2004 was their first data transmission to CDC. The FoodNet program is based out of the Institute for Public Health at the University of New Mexico, working in close partnership with the Office of Epidemiology of the New Mexico Department of Health. New Mexico's program will be statewide, covering 33 counties and a shared border with Mexico.

Karen Edge, the FoodNet coordinator for New Mexico has approximately 13 years experience in infectious disease epidemiology, including several years conducting HIV/AIDS surveillance. New Mexico has also hired four outstanding surveillance officers with strong backgrounds in public health. Karen Johnson previously worked in waterborne disease surveillance, Joanne Keefe worked in HIV/AIDS surveillance, and Lisa Butler comes from a nutrition and research background. These three surveillance officers will be based in Albuquerque and will be responsible for surveillance in three quarters of the state. Kathy Villa, who worked on surveillance for the Border Infectious Disease program prior to FoodNet, will be based in Las Cruces to cover the border area and the southwest quadrant of the state. New Mexico is currently recruiting and hiring a FoodNet principal investigator.

The biggest challenge New Mexico has faced so far is the distance needed to travel to laboratories and hospitals around the state. New Mexico is the fifth largest state in the nation and will bring racial and ethnic diversity to the FoodNet population with the additional of many Native American facilities, both Indian Health Service (IHS) and tribal. Of the 1.8 million persons residing in New Mexico, 42% are Hispanic and 9.5% are Native American.

To date, New Mexico has relied on passive surveillance for reporting of foodborne pathogens. With active laboratory-based surveillance, New Mexico will be able to better understand the burden of illness in the state. Please join us in welcoming our newest FoodNet site.



**Lisa Butler, Joanne Keefe, Karen Edge,  
Kathy Villa and Karen Johnson**



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## Introducing California's New Senior Epidemiologist: Katherine Feldman, DVM, MPH!

After months of eagerly waiting, Dr. Katherine Feldman, DVM, MPH, has come on board with California FoodNet as their new senior epidemiologist. Her responsibilities will include participation on the Outbreak Working Group and the Prospective Viral Study. Among her multiple credentials are her training as a CDC Preventive Medicine Fellow, EIS Officer, and California EIS Fellow. Welcome Dr. Feldman!

Note to Readers: We are eager to spotlight other studies in future "FoodNet News" issues. Is there a project you'd like to know more about? Is there a new member of your FoodNet team that you would like to introduce? Please contact us!

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Fred Angulo, Patricia Griffin

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